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THE ATARI FEDERATION

A user group dedicated to Atari computers

VOL III, ISSUE VII

3 August 1987



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RALPH BOCOCK - 734-2044

Membership in The Atari Federation is open to all persons interested in the Atari personal computer. Dues are \$10.00 per calendar year (\$15.00 per family) and are collected on the member's anniversary date. Membership includes a subscription to this newsletter and access to The Federation's library of public domain software.

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

by: Shirl A. Dellinger

Last month I told you that we at the Federation were going to make your summer HOT, and boy did we at the July meeting. I don't know about all of you but the Atari Federation Hackers Challenge disk by Paul Alhart, is driving me nuts!!!! Thanks Paul for bringing us something to keep us busy for what I think will be the rest of my natural life!

At this time I would like to thank Mr. Jim Wooding for doing a SUPER demo with the MIDI system. On that note I would like also to thank Jayne & Jim Wooding for setting up their display for Computer Connection, and for donating ten (10) raffle products - thanks!

For those of you that were not at the last meeting, we are going to be taking nomination for officers in September. I know what your thinking - lots of time! Well its never too early to think about who you want to be your officers. So if you have someone in mind, that you think would be good for the club, keep his/her name in the back of your mind, and be sure to be at the September meeting. We will have some officers that won't be running next year, so there will be some slots to fill. Something different for nominations, this year we will have ballots to fill out for each nomination. This should make the nominations run smoother.

We will have discount tickets for sale at the Aug. meeting for the ACENET All Atari Computer Faire, Sept. 19th & 20th. If your a member of both the Federation & S.M.L.A.C.E., you should think about signing out extra tickets to take to their meeting and letting them in on the discounted entrance price. Be sure to let your friends in on these discount tickets, as you don't have to be a member of the Federation to get the discount.

Some of the officers attended the ACENET meeting, the last meeting before the faire, and they will have an update for us at the Aug meeting.

I would like to welcome Laser Print to the Atari Federation, the new printer for our newsletter. See their ad elsewhere in this issue.

As I stated at the start of this article, I to am working on the Hacker's Challenge disk and the last thing I want to do is keep you from working on the Challenge just so you can read my article. So this month I will give you a break and let you get back to work!!!! Anyone want to give me a hint or two?



Get your **DISK OF THE MONTH**
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SECRETARIES REPORT

by: Chester Hadley

The July general membership meeting was preceded by the quarterly officers meeting on the 13th. The officers voted to establish the price of the ST-Disk of the Month at \$2.50, and to have Shirl order 50 ST disks. A special meeting will be held to establish a new Constitution.

The general membership meeting was opened by Shirl Dellinger at 7:01pm. The Woodings, of Computer Connections, were welcomed.

Tickets for the ACENET Fair Sept 19th and 20th will be available during the August meeting. Anyone who desires to work at the fair should contact Shirl ASAP.

Phil Price, creator of Alternate Reality, will be at the Santa Maria meeting in August. Shirl also thanked the members who participated and attended the Aladdin meeting in SM.

We have more mail order members, TSgt Arthur R. Tenette and Glen Lamb. Welcome. Shirl asked for more members to sponsor members out of the area.

Shirl gave a warning when dealing with mail order businesses. Black Patch is apparently out of business. Glenn Lamb wrote to warn us about White House Computers not handling orders and/or refunds to customer satisfaction. Another to watch is B & C ComputerVision, there is nothing good that can be said about them at this time. Order from the above companies at your own risk! A member (me) has had a bad time with ComputerVision. The letters sent by and to Chester was at the meeting for all interested members to read. Before you order by mail, check with other members.

Ten prospective logos were presented to the membership. The members present voted on a new Logo for the club. The winner was Shirl's. Bob Ribortone's logo was one vote behind the winner. Sharon Bracken and Pam Duke counted the ballots.

This months disk of the month was presented in a dramatic way by Paul Alhart. Only members could purchase the disk. They also had to sign for the disk at the time of purchase. The person who thinks they have the solution to the "Hackers Challenge" should call Paul. The first to do so and give the correct solution is the winner.

The FCC is considering additional charges for modem users. Check The Reference Point for a letter on this subject.

Shirl mentioned the new board on The Reference Point, DEAR GRUMPY. Special names and passwords were available for those who wish to go to the board anonymously. If the board is abused, the message base will be dropped.

During the break we all enjoyed cake baked and brought in by Shirl. Good Cake!!!

After the break Sharon Bracken won the Disk of the month in the member drawing. Herb Kanner selected a book on Machine Language and Mike Ruiz selected an Atari Joy Stick as winner.

of the raffle. Nine members won magazines, donated by Computer Connections, in a special raffle.

Jim Wooding presented a great demonstration of the ST system and the Music System MIDI.

After the demo, Bruce continued with the Telecommunication SIG.

****NOTE**** I wish to thank Chester Hadley & my husband for their help on the winning LOGO, without their help I doubt I could have done as well! (Shirl)

Remember, stop by my table and check out a disk and write a brief description of each file on that disk. Every little bit helps.

****NOTE**** After a Disk of the Month is more than THREE (3) months old, you can check it out from the library. Right now, I have two (March '87 & April '87) Disk's of the Month that can be checked out.

ATARI FAIRS!

by: Mike Sieben

LIBRARY NEWS!

by: John McCammon

If you are a Print Shop Graphics Fan, you'll LOVE the Disk of the Month for August and September! They contain almost 500 Print Shop Icons. Any of these icons can be used the Label Maker program available on last month's Disk of the Month, or with Print Shop.

Please help the club in our desperate fight for new PD material and reviewed disks.

Hi! This is my first crack at writing for the newsletter, for that matter anything public, so please bear with me. I have never been to a fair until this past June 19th, at the Santa Clara Convention Center. I saw Atari like I have never seen before. There were displays and demos presented by software and hardware manufactures most of which were selling there products at special prices or at the very least you can wheel and deal. What an opportunity to get a demonstration of a product from the people who know them best! If you are like me you don't have mega bucks to spend on software and going

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to the fair gave me the opportunity to eliminate bad buys or find suitable substitutes. I say suitable substitutions because there was some stuff there that I didn't know was out for our powerful computers and in the past few months I have been doing a lot of research into ST software. Computer stores even had booths selling products at a discount. This is where I couldn't resist. As some of you already know my wallet got caught with a 1040 ST and I might add at a mail order price!

Atari had their display of course. There was the EX line, which had the XEP-80 80 column card displayed and a 1040 ST which I expected to see displayed. Then there was the new stuff. On one end of the display was this computer hooked up to a Hard Disk and this larger than normal printer. It didn't take me long to figure out that the computer was a 4 megabyte ST (must have been the label "MEGA 4"). The printer was this laser thing we have been hearing about. It works! Great I might add. As I walked around the display I saw another Mega looking machine. No this isn't a ST compatible. It's the PC, an IBM compatible. After asking about these products I was told there wouldn't be a 1 meg machine. The plan seems to be that the 1040 will stay as is and that there will be a 2 and 4 mega ST which will have the "blitter chip" and a battery operated clock installed. The megas are to be made primarily

for the business user and sold through specialty stores. It didn't make much sense to me about the specialty stores because it has been a long time since I have seen Atari at a department store. Anyway these things we have been hearing about are real and we should be seeing them around August. Maybe you have seen them already, I was told the Megas were on a ship in Taiwan.

Well I talked about what I saw and heard. It is my advice to you that if you are in the market for anything for your Atari, or just looking for information, you can't afford to pass up the fair in Glendale. Beware, your wallet may not be as big as your desire. I have it on my calendar to go because I want some software for my new ST. On a personal note I have some 8 bit stuff that I want sold before the fair. Can't imagine what I need the money for! If you could use a 1025 and/or Okimate 10 printer or an 800XL please give me a call at 735-6623. No reasonable offer will be refused! I might sound like I have given up on my 8 bit but this is not the case. I won't give up "Old Faithful".

Well this has been fun but there is only so much room that I can have for this article. I am planning to do another article soon which will be a review on Timeworks' Word Writer ST. So if you are interested, look out for it.

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Answers-Tips-and-Relevant Information

by Paul Alhart

The following TIPS were all inspired by questions I received from you the membership this month. Thank you. Keep it up.

RANA:

If you own a Rana disk drive, sooner or latter the disk eject spring is going to break. When it does, go to your local hardware store and pick up a 1/4" Molly Bolt. The spring used in the Molly Bolt is just what you need.

P.R Connection:

Having trouble with some of your programs like AtariWriter+ Proofreader that you can't explain? In some models of the P.R. Connection the "R:Handler" is loaded more than once by some programs. This causes memory conflicts and strange

things happen. The "R:Handler" can be disabled though. Remove the P.R. Connection from it's case and locate two pins labeled "R OFF" that are on the board just behind the R1:Port connector. Jumper across these two pins to disable the "R:Handler". If you use the R:Port (most of us don't) then put a switch here instead of a jumper so you can turn the "R:Handler On or Off depending on your application program and hardware requirements.

Star Stuffer Fonts:

If you are using my StarStuffer Fonts with AtariWriter (I hope you are), you may have noticed that when you print more than one page only the first page is in the font you selected. The easiest fix for this is to put your Control Codes to select the down loaded font in a Header. The Header will be "printed" at the top of each page and thus reinitialize the font at the beginning of each page. This should also work for any other word processors that you may be using.

XM301/1050

It has come to my attention that some early XM301 modems and

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some early 1050 Disk Drives are Not compatible with each other. This shows up as flakey drive operation when ever the modem is plugged in to the chain. One of our members had this problem and called Atari Tech Support. Atari agreed to replace his XM301 at no charge.

Daisy Chain:

Are you still unplugging your modem so you can plug in your printer interface because you don't have enough I/O Ports. The XM301 and several other devices don't have an extra I/O port (required for Daisy Chaining). To eliminate this problem you need two spare I/O cables. Cut both cables in half and splice them together with Pin #1 of one cable half going to Pin #1 of each of the other three cable halves. Pin #2 to Pins #2 and so on. NOTE: The wires are color coded, but the color code may vary from one cable to another. Check Carefully!! Now plug one of the four connectors into your computer. Connect the other three plugs to three devices that have two I/O ports (like disk drives) and now you have three EXTRA I/O ports to use for other things. You can adapt this to your system by making the new cable with only three legs or as many legs as you need.

CLUE!!!

The Atari Federation Challenge is off to a good start. There are many of you working on it, but still time to get started if you haven't because no one has found the answer yet. Greg Kolby spotted a typo though. In one of the clues I used "TOO" when I should have used "TO". There is no secret meaning to it, I just goofed. I do have a clue for you now though. I will have another one for you at the August meeting, so Be There!

CLUE: "Basically, the key to getting started with Hackers Challenge is the key to get started."

Good Luck!

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TELECOMMUNICATION SIG
(The Spld3r Side Of Life)

by: Bruce Franke

This is a sad story, but it has to be told. I am sorry that the SIG didn't go as planned, but it didn't turn out to be our fault. The sysop of OPUS was working on his system at the time that we wanted to go on-line and as you could see and guess, there were problems. All I can say is: this will happen from time to time.

The SIG this month will consist of an on-line review of the Lompoc Guide BBS System. We will have the printed help menu's for you on this system and we even have some print-outs left over from The Reference Point BBS, and Opus. So be sure to pick these up at the meeting.

If you have a modem and want to understand your local BBS's a little bit more, or if your thinking about getting a modem, you really should sit in on this SIG! The Guide, (as we like to call it) has some really nice features that most systems in our area don't have.

DEMO

by: Shirl Dellinger

This month we will have a demo that has been requested: S.A.M. by Don't Ask Software. The main difference between this demo and any other done on SAM is Paul has written an interesting program to work with SAM. This little program will really make SAM work for you in more ways than you thought possible. I don't want to give too much away, but you will like what you see and hear!!

We will also have a short demo by Greg on the best reasons for getting a Trak Ball. He'll show those of you that don't have one, why you should rush out and get one - while the price is right!

The following people are to bring in software/hardware:

Computer & Drive - Paul Alhart

Monitor & Modem - Shirl Dellinger

Trak Ball & Program - Greg Koby

Please don't forget these items!!

PROGRAM MAKING SERVICE

by: Greg Koby

Hi computer users, have you ever wished there was a program that had all the features you needed? Have you run into a brick wall when it comes to software meeting your needs?

Well have I got a deal for you! I will make that program for you for the 8-bit ATARI computers. Any program you want, I'll make.. You name the features you need/want in the program from the color of the screen up to whether you want anything scrolling. I'll even repair any bugs that you might find in it FREE.

The cost of the program will vary from program to program. Included with the working copy of your new program, you will also be given the listing of the program for future fixes and/or modifications you might come up with at a later time.

If your interested in my idea, jot down your program ideas and see me at the August meeting. Those of you with modems can upload your ideas to The Reference Point BBS.

REAL BASIC

by: Phil Rominger

As a rule I generally don't like to review languages, because they don't hold a lot of meaning for the non-programmer. This type of review also tends to be very dry, but I hope that this one will be an exception. Real Basic was produced by Computer Crossware Labs (CCL) to work on any ST with a least 512K of ram and one disk drive. With a little manipulation it will work on either a color or monochrome monitor.

CCL was good enough to donate this program to our club, and it is now available for check out on a monthly basis from our library. If you try this product and feel that you would use it, please contact myself or Shirl Dellinger. I would really like to work up a group buy on this program, and it can only be done if enough of us are interested.

Real Basic is an interpreter much like Atari Basic (8 bit), with the exception that the editor is separated from the command line. In other words if you type in a program and wish to edit an error (none of us do that anyway) you physically have to type in the command "EDIT" to correct the error without retyping the entire line. Personally I didn't find this to be a problem, I just ignore any errors that I make while typing (more on this later). I am not going to mention or go into a great amount of detail on every feature offered in this program (only the ones I like! It's my review). I used CCL's manual as a rough outline for this

article, and that may help you when you try this program.

Real Basic had so many good features that it was really hard to know where to start, but here goes. The first thing that you learn about Real Basic is it's editing versatility. It has 9 cursor commands, 6 delete commands and the ability to insert a line. The first real command that makes you sit up and take notice is "AUTO" (auto line numbering). Hey did that come in my copy of ST Basic. Earlier I mentioned that there were 6 delete commands, well by using "DELETE" in the command line you can delete a single line, a range of lines, or a mixed bag (EX: DELETE 50-70,100,120,1000-2000). You may not use this command very often, but it gives you the idea of the flexibility that was programmed in this language.

One command that I thought was very nice was "LLIST". Now I don't now about all of you, but I very seldom used the Atari Basic command to list a program to the printer. If there were many of you out there like me, when you did need to do this you ended up having to tear up your computer area going through books looking for the right command. "LLIST" does a program print dump for you, and the only way they could have made it easier to remember would be to name it "PLIST".

In the area of data manipulation Real Basic gives you four functions and 16 key words, and if you can't manipulate data with all of that then there is something seriously wrong with you. I'm going to skip the individual features in this area, because other people have articles in this newsletter.

Real Basic has a full range of disk file and I/O functions. Have you ever tried to get a list of files on disk from basic? With this program try "DIR" and it will list all the files on disk with a BAS extension. Real Basic also gives you a wide variety of commands for saving, loading, merging and deleting files.

Now I'm going to regress and explain why I said that I ignored the errors that I made. Like Atari Basic this program gives you a error number when you make a mistake, but unlike Atari Basic it also gives you an error message telling you exactly what you did wrong. And to top all that off it even marks the line with the error by placing an asterisk after the line number.

This program supports a host of graphic, sound and math functions, but I was really amazed by the section on program flow. This is the part of the program that is concerned with goto, gosub, etc (with some interesting twists). There were also some interesting commands such as "FLY", which disables the error checking, subroutine stack overflow, run-time garbage collection, trace mode and step mode (it makes your program run fast). Now I mentioned the trace mode and all of you ST owners have seen TRON and TROFF using ST Basic, but Real Basic also has SSON/SSOFF. What this does is executes each line of basic and halts after each (nifty huh!).

Real Basic gives you 16 functions to manipulate strings. This allows you to manipulate strings with as much variety as you can imagine. And on top of all that it even gives the

advanced programmer the ability to access the TOS operating system, the Virtual Device Interface (VDI), and the Application Environment System.

Having covered all of that you might be saying that Real Basic is a great program, but why should I go out and buy it when I got ST Basic free with my computer. Well, as some of you may or may not know Atari is no longer shipping software with the ST. And for all of you that use ST Basic in your daily programming, how would you like to be able to add assembly language modules to your basic program. Thats right, Real Basic comes with an in-line MC68000 assembler (CCL your kind of people). Well, I've told you about a lot of the great features of this program, but there is some problems with it. Real Basic doesn't tolerate sloppy programming (is that the softwares fault??). What that boils down to is that some of your P.D. software will not run without a little work on your part. I tried it on several and was able to get most of them to work with just minor changes.

I feel this is a quality piece of software, that was well thought out and well put together. The documentation only covers the major features in this program and takes it for granted that you have a working knowledge of the basic language. I personally feel that it is an outstanding addition to the club library and would be a welcome addition to anyones personal library.

*THANKS**THANKS**THANKS**THANKS**THANKS**THANKS**THANKS*

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